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the magic lantern Gazette

collecting... projecting... and sharing

A CINEMA ORGANIST AND HIS SLIDES

See article on page 3

The Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada

www. magiclanternsociety.org

Two of Edward O'Henry's Brenograph slides for the 1929 film The Desert Song.

The Desert Song is a 1929 American pre-Code operetta film directed by Roy Del Ruth and starring John Boles, Carlotta King, Louise Fazenda, and Myrna Loy. It was photographed partly in two-color Technicolor, the first film released by Warner Bros. to include footage in color. The film included a 10-minute intermission during which music was played.

The significance of 'pre-Code' is that, after 1935, the original 1929 version became impossible to exhibit in the United States due to its pre-Production Code era content, which included sexual innuendo, lewd suggestive humor, and open discussion of themes such as homosexuality (e.g. Johnny Arthur plays a character who is obviously gay). Consequently, a cleaned-up remake was released in 1943, with a third version following in 1953.

Editorial

When looking at the history behind magic lanterns and early cinema we have to wonder if we are secret pyromaniacs at heart! So many major conflagrations have shaped the development of our hobby.

Fortunately with the Madame Tussaud's fire in London in 1925 nobody died - it appears that even a large green parrot in his cage was rescued alive from the blaze. The destruction of the original site led to the rebuilding, including a cinema, an organist complete with lantern slides and a Brenograph of course. That first organist's slide collection eventually found its way into our collection, after which we began to trace the life story of the man who had owned them and where, when and how they were used.

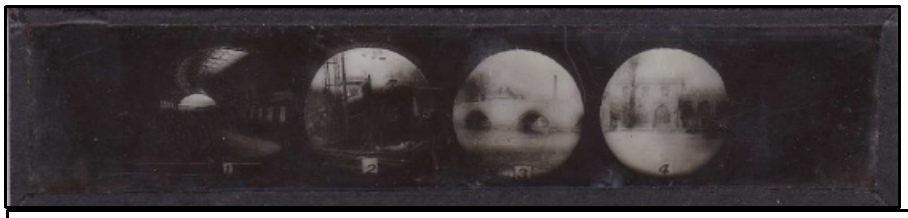
We were delighted to receive Matt Schnittker's illustrated description of his presentation in the "Diggins" event at the Columbia Historic State Park in California. (Matt, together with Melissa Ferrari, is the organiser of our Convention in September.) Here we have a quick glimpse of some of his expertise in several fields! The Convention, staged in the Queen Mary ship, is shaping up to be a most interesting meeting. The venue alone is exciting but the addition of friends, food and lanterns push it into the stuff of dreams.

The Torpedo Ship set of slides demonstrates why black and white films were slow to gain popularity. The lanternist could by then do so much more on the screen, and in color.

From the big screen to a very little one, just when you think you have seen it all. This is the size of the tiny slide and its four images featured on page 23. It is amazing that photographic slides were produced in this size, with four high quality images per slide. There is no mention of a special lantern - we can only conjecture at this stage. Could it even have been a modified flash light?

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Kentwood Wells, and we thank Terry Borton for sharing this obituary and memory of this previous editor of the Gazette.

Our thanks go out as usual to the contributors in this issue. We welcome contributions to the next issue, particularly from new writers!



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President's Message

The 20th convention of the Magic Lantern Society of the U.S. & Canada is only a short time away. If you, like me already are looking forward to meeting with everyone again, seeing and hearing much about the many aspects of Magic Lantern art and its many related cultural activities, and perhaps find a few choice items you simply can't resist having and taking home with you for some future use, then you don't need me telling you what a great opportunity it is to meet others who share the same unique interests.

Seeing each other in person at a convention, where you easily can exchange views and information, and generally have a wonderful time while being entertained, educated, and even occasionally lectured about something you may not have heard or seen before is not something to be easily missed. It only happens every two years and I can only encourage everyone to come and join us for this special event.

In case you would like to help with the convention organization, please contact Matt and Melissa and see if you can be of assistance in any way.

Our convention is also a good time to meet members of your Board of Directors, ask them any questions, or discuss any concerns you may have. The convention program will include a special time for our biennial business meeting which is open to all members. Should you have an interest in becoming a board member you can see what it's like, as well as ask currently serving board members about their experience. The Society's election for the Board of Directors will conclude at the convention. Election ballots will be mailed to you in time for submission well before the convention. You may send your ballot to the Secretary/Treasurer or submit it in person at the convention.

For all those planning ahead, it is not too early to consider where our next convention will take place. If you or someone you know would like to host our 21st convention in 2026, please feel free to propose your ideas. It is helpful if you already have prepared some more definite plan in case there are questions.

If you have not already done so, remember to register for the convention as soon as possible; after August 20 food will no longer be included with your registration. Also make sure you are booking your room in time; after August 20 we no longer are guaranteed our special hotel room rate.

I'm very much looking forward to seeing you on board the Queen Mary,

Karl Link

President

Forthcoming Events

July 13 & 14, 2024, ***The Art of the Magic Lantern,*** exhibit and performances, Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences, 307 High Street, Mount Holly, NJ.

Aug. 27, 2024, ***BOEM! Or Experimental media archaeological reflections on re-enactment and 'crazy' avant-garde performances as part of media history,*** lecture by Annie van den Oever, Antwerp Summer School Arts & Media Archaeology, University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Sept. 19-21, 2024, ***20th Magic Lantern Convention: Bringing the Magic to Movieland,*** Magic Lantern Society of the US and Canada, **Queen Mary,** Long Beach, CA https://www.magiclanternsociety.org/2024-convention

For more see inside of the back cover.

Officers of the Magic Lantern Society of US & Canada

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Madame Tussaud's and a Cinema Organist

David Evans investigates Edward O'Henry and his slides

On the 18th March 1925 at 10.30 p.m. a major conflagration occurred in Marylebone, London. By 11.30 the interior of the top floor was a raging inferno. Madame Tussaud's, the famous wax-works museum, was a wreck with the whole of the roof collapsed with the exception of the domed structure at the western end. Scores of fire engines attended and about ten thousand onlookers assembled to watch the proceedings. The firemen were hampered by being unable to get to the hydrants, and nearly a mile of hose had to be run from garages and other buildings. The fire chief, Mr A R Dryer, directed matters and took an active part in the proceedings despite wearing evening dress as he had been out with friends.

Fig 1: Madame Tussaud's Cinema and Exhibition in Baker Street, London circa 1928 (Mike Blakemore image)

An eye witness who lived opposite the museum described the fire as a wonderful spectacle with strong red and gold flames leaping fifty feet in the air from the roof. The wax models could be heard sizzling.

As soon as possible people from the Salvage Corps managed to enter the building and started to remove what could be salvaged, consisting of a great many pictures, some of the figures and a large cage containing a green parrot, which showed signs of recovering from its ordeal. The sight of the firemen carrying wax models of famous people was a strange one.

Fig 3: Effigies of various sporting personalities

The site was cleared and Madame Tussaud's rebuilt, this time including a cinema – one of London's first 'Supercinemas' that could seat one thousand people – as well as a new waxworks museum. Tussaud's cinema included seating in stalls and circle levels and was equipped with a Wurlitzer model F two-manual theatre organ with its console on a lift. The theatre opened on 26th April 1928 showing Maria Corda in 'Helen of Troy'. The first organist was Edward O'Henry, lately arrived from Walsall, Staffordshire (now West Midlands) where in 1925 he became the first organist in the UK to play a Wurlitzer. He

continued playing 'Tussaud's Grand Wurlitzer Organ' until he was replaced in 1932 by Leslie James.

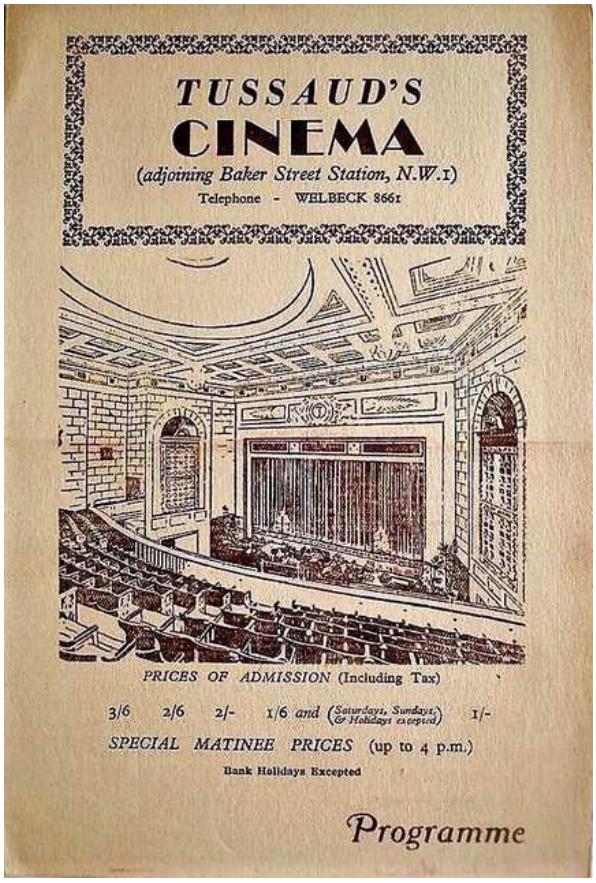

TUSSAUD'S
CINEMA
(adjoining Baker Street Station, N.W.1)
Telephone - WELBECK 8661
PRICES OF ADMISSION (Including Tax)
3/6 2/6 2/- 1/6 and (Saturdays, Sundays, & Holidays excepted) 1/-
SPECIAL MATINEE PRICES (up to 4 p.m.)
Bank Holidays Excepted
Programme

Fig 4: Tussaud's Cinema Programme, circa 1928
(Mike Blakemore image)

Edward O'Henry created quite a following, broadcasting on BBC National Radio from 12 noon to 1.00 p.m. every Tuesday for many years. He issued many gramophone records on the Broadcast label and others.

Tussaud's cinema was one of London's earliest super cinemas. It was described as 'small and cozy', holding about one thousand people with a grand circle. The Wurlitzer organ was a two-manual eight unit Model F instrument with an amazing clarinet stop that O'Henry used effectively as a solo stop. The units were diapason, violin, viol celeste, flute, vox humana, tuba horn and tibia as well as the clarinet. Using second-touch (depressing a key half way down produced one tone and depressing it fully produced a different one) the organist could make the instrument sound larger than it was and the organ could be heard in every part, especially the drums and percussion! If you were in the audience, sitting downstairs, to see the last programme of the day and it was nearly the end of the big picture, then, as the house tabs folded over the screen you would suddenly be brought to your feet by the machine-gun rattle of the Wurlitzer snare drum. Edward O'Henry had come back to play God Save the King and a jolly marching tune to see the audience out!

O'Henry was the first organist to introduce his organ by walking across the stage from the wings to meet the rising console. Toward the end of the Interval, during which the organ interlude would be played, Edward O'Henry would raise his forefinger to quell the tumultuous applause and command silence for an encore. Quite often he would accompany a vocal record played on the non-sync[1] (record player), after which he descended on the console playing the opening music of the big picture, a technique organists used to call "joining films".

Have you ever wondered what actually happened behind the scenes during this part of the performance? Stan Perry, supervising projectionist for the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer chain, describes the scene in 1946:

"THE scene is the projection room. The closing bars of 'The End' music comes through the monitor speakers as the film closes. On to the screen comes the organist's announcement title, and at the same time we in the box faintly hear the familiar signature tune which is the signal to 'spot' our friend down there as he rises majestically on his console into full view of the audience. Does this mean that we can take a rest while the organ solo is on? Not on your life! Four projectionists are now going to 'sweat' for the next ten or fifteen minutes. The routine goes something like this.

The signature tune ends and the organist swings half round to speak into his mike - and we've got to 'get him over.' Then the buzzer goes - the signal for No. 1 slide to illustrate what he's playing. There are usually twenty to thirty slides, so that the lantern takes care of one projectionist.

Two 'spots' are now in action; one flooding the console, the other concentrating on the keyboard because our friend's hand must be shown in action. Result: two more projectionists busy. And don't let's forget the coloured backgrounds, which means another projectionist on the Brenograph[3].

We carry on until - what's this? Slide No.15, 'Old Fashioned Home.' This is where a projectionist leaves one of the spots to take care of itself while he starts up a film previously threaded in the projector, to be used as a pictorial background.

The Brenograph has been cut off while this number is on, but the operator has had to stand by to bring it in again at the end of the item.

All is silent in the projection room except for the regular buzz of the slide changer and the plop of the slides as they are dropped into the carrier.

We come to the last number, and a record is required on the non-sync. just to make sure that we use almost everything we've got in the projection room. On goes the record; and as it nears its end, the organist builds up on his closing bars.

He stops. The record ends. We give him the white spot, close screen curtains and then house curtains, cut off the slide lantern and the Brenograph. The keyboard light spots his bowing as he goes down on the console, playing his signature tune. The house lights come up- pause - they go down again. Both sets of curtains open and the title of the feature hits the screen. That's that!

What precisely was needed to put over that organ solo? Only four projectionists, two spotlights, one slide lantern, one Brenograph, one projector, one mike, one non-sync., thirty slides, six background pieces, one film and one record - these apart from rehearsals, split second timing and team-work. But that's show business."

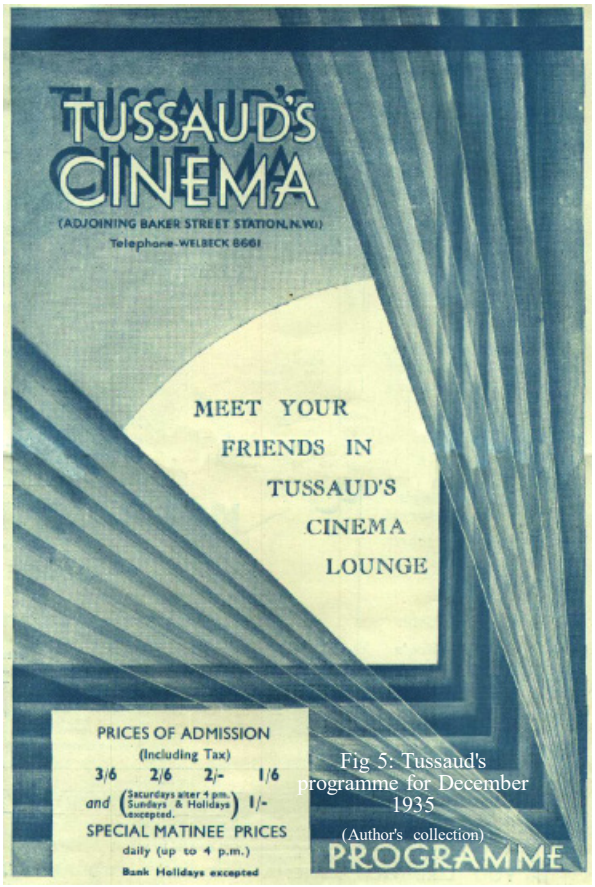


Fig 5: Tussaud's programme for December 1935
(Author's collection)

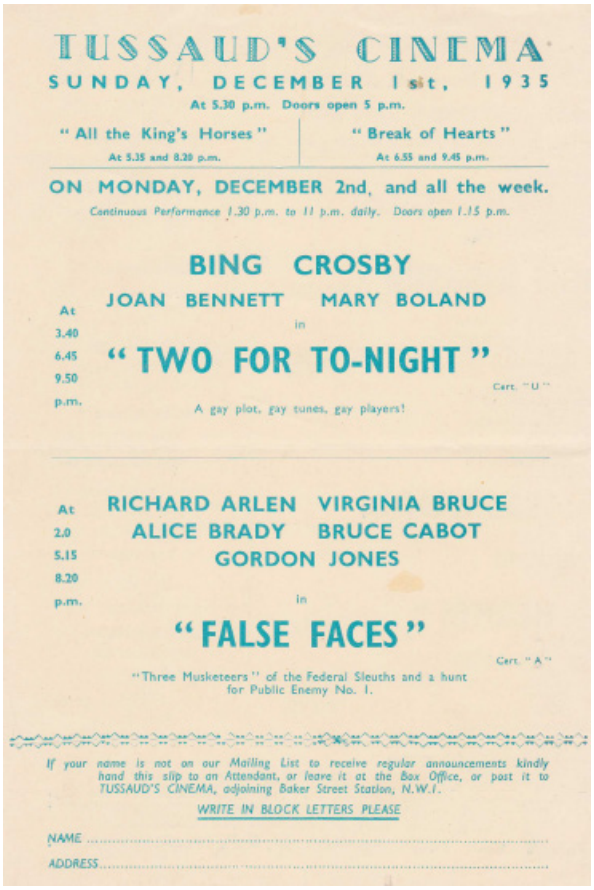
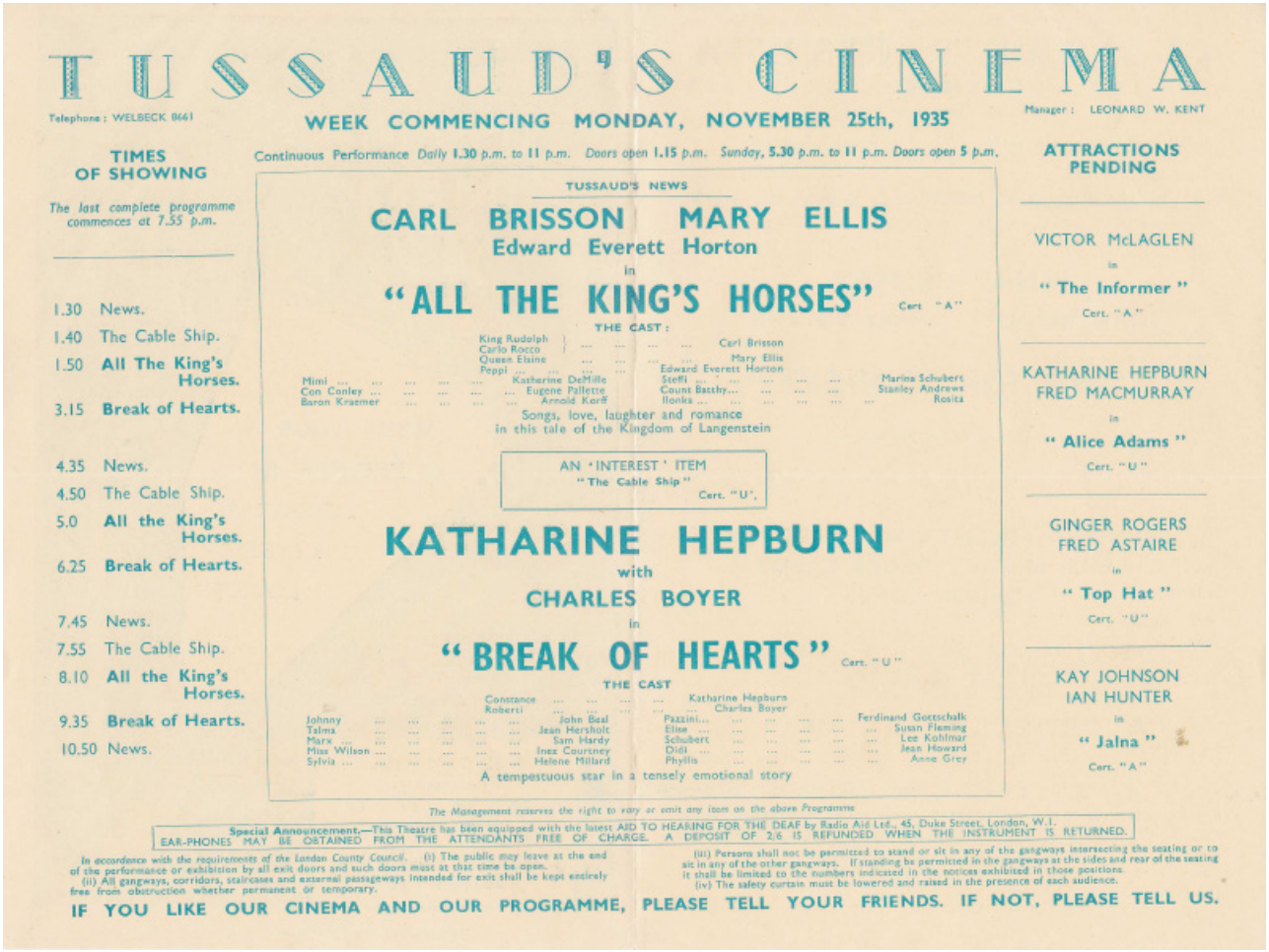

TUSSAUD'S CINEMA
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1st, 1935
At 5.30 p.m. Doors open 5 p.m.
"All the King's Horses"
At 5.35 and 8.20 p.m.
"Break of Hearts"
At 6.55 and 9.45 p.m.
ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 2nd, and all the week.
Continuous Performance 1.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. daily. Doors open 1.15 p.m.
BING CROSBY
JOAN BENNETT MARY BOLAND
At 3.40 6.45 9.50 p.m.
in
"TWO FOR TO-NIGHT"
Cert. "U"
A gay plot, gay tunes, gay players!
RICHARD ARLEN VIRGINIA BRUCE
ALICE BRADY BRUCE CABOT
GORDON JONES
At 2.0 5.15 8.20 p.m.
in
"FALSE FACES"
Cert. "A"
"Three Musketeers" of the Federal Sleuths and a hunt for Public Enemy No. 1.
If your name is not on our Mailing List to receive regular announcements kindly hand this slip to an Attendant, or leave it at the Box Office, or post it to TUSSAUD'S CINEMA, adjoining Baker Street Station, N.W.1.
WRITE IN BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE
NAME .....
ADDRESS .....

Fig 6: Tussaud's presentations on December 1st 1935
(Author's Collection)

Edward O'Henry was born in 1896 at Brislington, south-east of Bristol. He trained as an art student and was interested in music as a hobby. He served in the First World War, fighting in France for three and a half years, spending several months in a German prison camp. He returned to Germany as Instructor in Music and Art, Army of Occupation, Cologne, from 1918 -19. He graduated and became an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, and first became a Cinema organist in 1922 at the Futurist, Scarborough. After his spell at Madame Tussaud's, he became opening organist at the Capitol Theatres in Aberdeen (1932) and Didsbury, Manchester (1932-34), moving to the Forum, Jersey, Channel Islands, where he remained from 1935-1940. He escaped as a refugee from Jersey just before the German Occupation of the Channel Islands in June 1940, returning to the mainland and working at various venues during the war. He returned to the Forum, Jersey in September 1945, after much broadcasting on BBC radio and



TUSSAUD'S CINEMA

Telephone : WELBECK 8661

WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25th, 1935

Manager : LEONARD W. KENT

TIMES OF SHOWING

The last complete programme commences at 7.55 p.m.

1.30 News.
1.40 The Cable Ship.
1.50 All The King's Horses.
3.15 Break of Hearts.
4.35 News.
4.50 The Cable Ship.
5.0 All the King's Horses.
6.25 Break of Hearts.
7.45 News.
7.55 The Cable Ship.
8.10 All the King's Horses.
9.35 Break of Hearts.
10.50 News.

Continuous Performance Daily 1.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Doors open 1.15 p.m. Sunday, 5.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Doors open 5 p.m.

TUSSAUD'S NEWS

CARL BRISSON MARY ELLIS
Edward Everett Horton
in
"ALL THE KING'S HORSES" Cert "A"

THE CAST:

King Rudolph ... Carl Brisson
Carlo Rocco ... Mary Ellis
Queen Elaine ... Edward Everett Horton
Peppi ...
Mimi ... Katherine DeMille
Con Conley ... Eugene Pallette
Baron Kraemer ... Arnold Korff
Steffi ... Marina Schubert
Count Batchy ... Stanley Andrews
Ilonka ... Rosita

Songs, love, laughter and romance in this tale of the Kingdom of Langenstein

AN 'INTEREST' ITEM
"The Cable Ship"
Cert. "U".

KATHARINE HEPBURN
with
CHARLES BOYER
in
"BREAK OF HEARTS" Cert. "U"

THE CAST

Constance ... Katharine Hepburn
Roberti ... Charles Boyer
Johnny ... John Beal
Talma ... Jean Hersholt
Marx ... Sam Hardy
Miss Wilson ... Inez Courtney
Sylvia ... Helene Millard
Pazzini ... Ferdinand Gottschalk
Elise ... Susan Fleming
Schubert ... Lee Kohlmar
Didi ... Jean Howard
Phyllis ... Anne Grey

A tempestuous star in a tensely emotional story

ATTRACTIONS PENDING

VICTOR McLAGLEN
in
" The Informer "
Cert. " A "

KATHARINE HEPBURN
FRED MACMURRAY
in
" Alice Adams "
Cert. " U "

GINGER ROGERS
FRED ASTAIRE
in
" Top Hat "
Cert. " U "

KAY JOHNSON
IAN HUNTER
in
" Jalna "
Cert. " A "

The Management reserves the right to vary or omit any item on the above Programme

Special Announcement.—This Theatre has been equipped with the latest AID TO HEARING FOR THE DEAF by Radio Aid Ltd., 45, Duke Street, London, W.1. EAR-PHONES MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE ATTENDANTS FREE OF CHARGE. A DEPOSIT OF 2/6 IS REFUNDED WHEN THE INSTRUMENT IS RETURNED.

In accordance with the requirements of the London County Council. (i) The public may leave at the end of the performance or exhibition by all exit doors and such doors must at that time be open. (ii) All gangways, corridors, staircases and external passageways intended for exit shall be kept entirely free from obstruction whether permanent or temporary. (iii) Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating or to sit in any of the other gangways. If standing be permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating it shall be limited to the numbers indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. (iv) The safety curtain must be lowered and raised in the presence of each audience.

IF YOU LIKE OUR CINEMA AND OUR PROGRAMME, PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS. IF NOT, PLEASE TELL US.

Fig 7: Tussaud's programme for November 25th 1935

(Author's Collection)

recording some 70 records. In his later life he became organist of St James' Church, Jersey and died in June 1970 at the age of 74. He was described as a 'very polished and stylish musician'.

Fig 8: Edward O'Henry, Organist

The Brenograph mentioned above (Fig 9) was a huge, heavy and complex double magic lantern expressly designed for use in the projection booths of movie theatres in the silent film era. With the coming of sound films they gradually were phased out, but as can be read above, in a few theatres they were still in use in the 1930s and 40s and it appears that O'Henry still had one available in the 1940s, as he had in his collection slides for it illustrating the Royal Airforce – only referred to as that from World War II and during his time at the Forum Jersey. The Brenkert F7 Master Brenograph was the ultimate development of the genus, patents on various aspects of development having being filed from 1924 to 1929. The F7 was exhibited for the first time at the 29th Annual Convention of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Motion Picture Machine Operators held in Detroit in June 1928. Features included Iris dissolving shutters and Framing shutters could be instantly set to frame the screen or stage opening. For example, one effect operating in the upper unit could show moving clouds on the upper half of the screen

or stage and in the lower half a moonlight rippling on water effect. The projection lenses were a full four

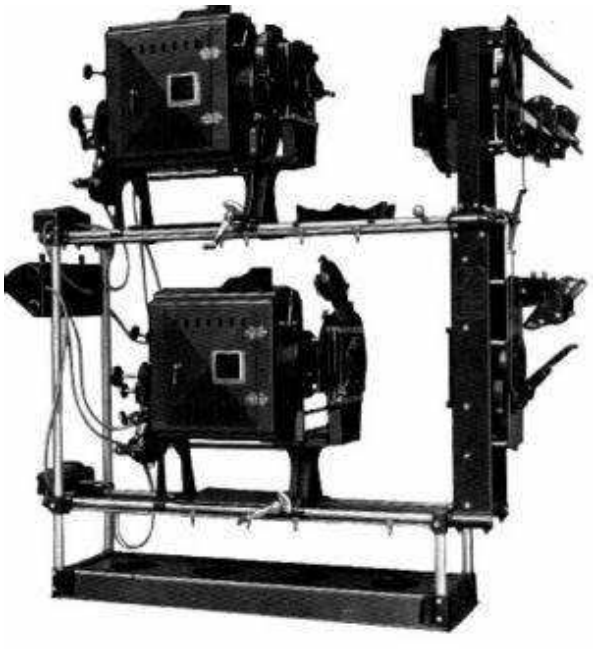


Fig 9: The Master Brenograph F7

inches in diameter to give the maximum amount of light and flat field of focus. The two lamp houses were provided with tilting mirrors, so that their beams of light could be directed up, down or to either side of the stage, or even up to the theatre ceiling. With the iris shutters, varying width of beams could be used – a broad beam for covering the ceiling or a narrow one to illuminate the organist. A considerable range of subject matter was available in the special 'Brenograph' size slides (4" x 5") as well as the regular 3 ¼" x 4" ones.

The stock market crash of 1929 did nothing to enhance the sales of the Brenograph and it seems that only a relatively small number were sold between the start of 1929 and the issue of their Catalog 28 in July 1930, reference being made to its installation in 'several hundred' theatres throughout the United States and Canada, and in many foreign countries. No advertisements were placed after 1931, though passing mention of the device was made in trade journals of the 1930s and 40s.

From the projection booth, these complex machines could project airplanes flying through moving clouds, running water, fire, song lyrics dissolving from one verse to the next for sing-alongs, changing colors of patterned light, strobe effects, spot lights, and hundreds of special effect scenes manufactured by the Maurice Workstel Studios and a few others. In Britain, Morgan's Slides Ltd produced slides for the Brenograph in addition to many others.

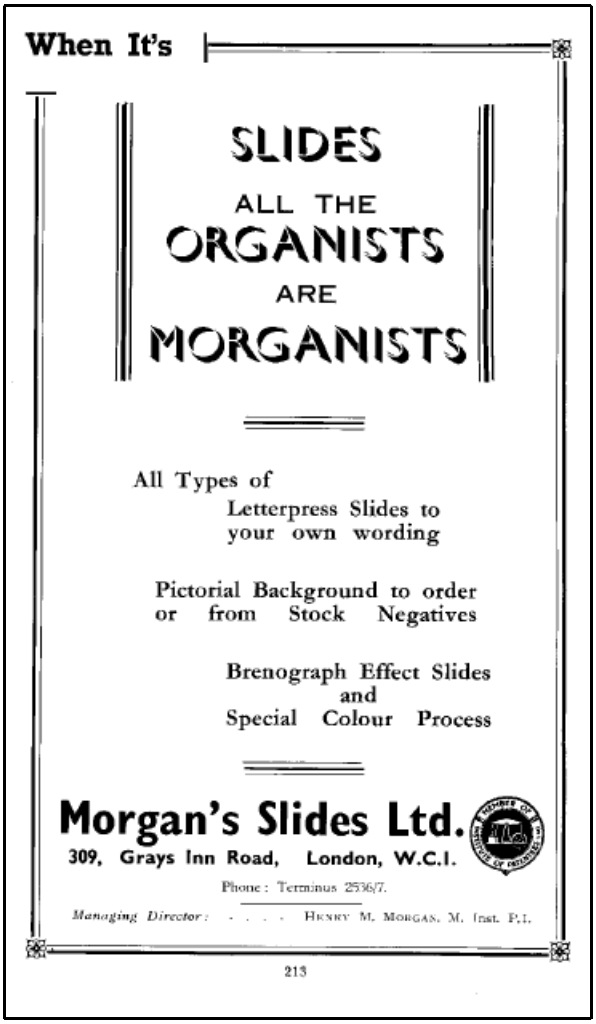


Fig 10: Morgan Slide advertisement from the 1930s

They produced song slides for sing-alongs, stories, advertising slides for many years. They were produced by the Morgan's Projected Publicity method: glasses were covered with a semi-opaque paint and after drying drawings were scratched into them. The precision with which this was done suggests that a stencil or pantograph was used. The result was then coloured by hand. The plates were 3.25 x 4 inches (approximately 8 x 10 cm), the so-called American format that was commonly used in cinemas. Patent 216349 dates from May 29, 1924 and was for "Lantern slides for use having an opaque coating which can be cut through by a sharp-pointed instrument to form diagrams etc."

Figs 16 to 25 illustrate the technique.

O'Henry's Slides

Back in 1975 we were fortunate enough to acquire Edward O'Henry's entire slide collection through a friend in Jersey and members may recall that we presented some of them at the Hollywood Convention in 2000. The presentations were reviewed in the Magic Lantern Gazette Volume 12 No. 3 in Summer 2000.

O'Henry did not have any of the 5" x 4" Brenograph slides but did have many of the 4" x 3 1/4" ones. Fig

Fig 11: A Brenograph slide from post 1940

11 shows one dating from the second world war period.

Figure 12 shows how he may have used it in a cinema - by this time the Forum in Jersey, Channel Islands.

NOTES:

[1] A turntable for playing records during an interval or during the running of silent films. (Not, however, the one occasionally used to sync sound to silent films.) This is transmitted electrically through the theatre's sound system and can be projected from the speaker behind the screen.

[2] Writing in 'Theatre Organ World' edited by Jack Courtney for the Theatre Organists Benevolent Fund in 1946.

(from Thomas J Mathiesen – "The Brenograph and the Brenkert Light Projection Company", Indiana, 2017.)

Fig 13: Stars and music projected on the ceiling

Fig 14: Start of the sequence

Fig 15: Second in sequence

Fig 12: Brenograph slide combined with story slides.

Fig 16: Shirley Temple - Actress (1928 - 2014)

Fig 17: Bing Crosby - Singer (1903 - 1977)

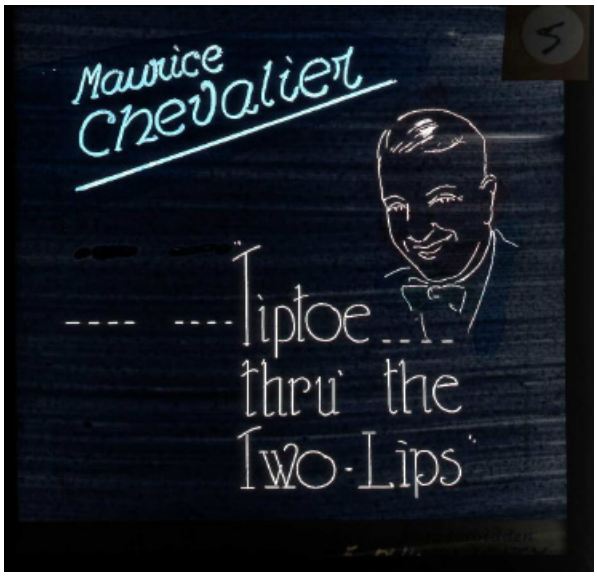


Fig 18: Maurice Chevalier - Singer & Actor (1888 - 1972)

Fig 19: Mae West - Actress (1893 - 1980)

Fig 20: Greta Garbo - actress (1905 - 1990)

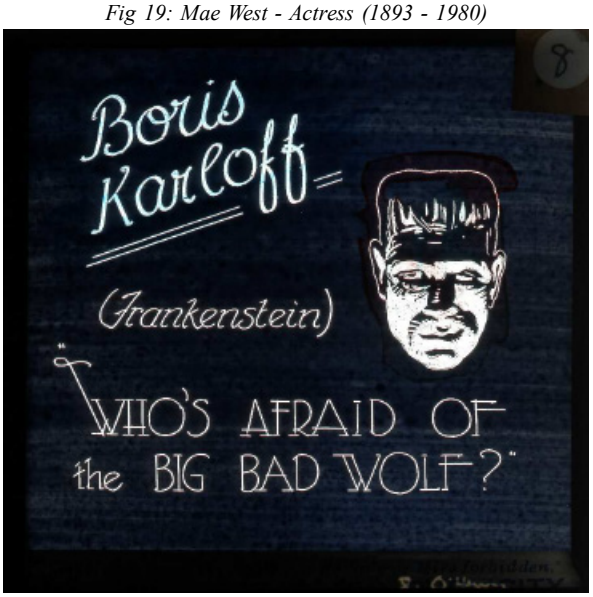


Fig 21: Boris Karloff - Actor - (1887 - 1869)

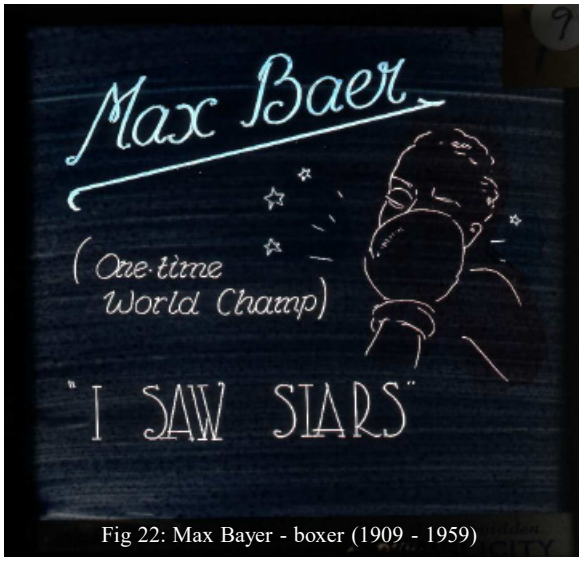


Fig 22: Max Bayer - boxer (1909 - 1959)

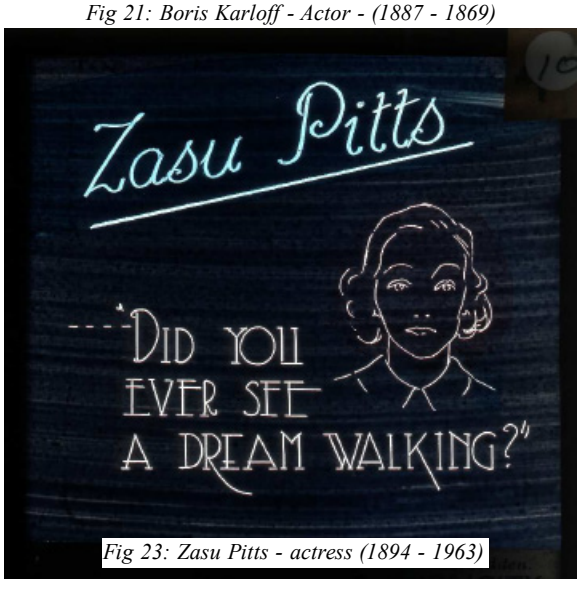


Fig 23: Zasu Pitts - actress (1894 - 1963)

Fig 24: George Arliss - actor (1868 - 1946)

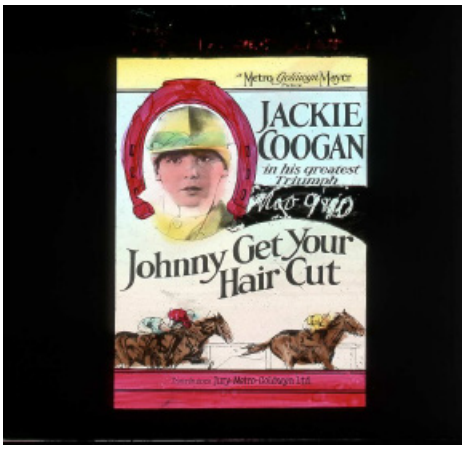
Fig 25: Warner Oland - actor (1869 - 1938)

Movie Slides from the O'Henry Collection

Carl Laemmle presents
The BLUE RIBBON EVENT
Premier Attraction of it's Kind-A Drama of Action on Air, Land and Sea, Swift as it's classical Namesake, Tense with Thrills-
LILLIAN RICH
"The KENTUCKY DERBY"
UNIVERSAL JEWEL DIRECTED BY KING BAGGOT
NOTE THIS MARVELOUS CAST OF PLAYERS
GERTRUDE ASTOR
WALTER MCGRAIL
EMMETT KING
LIONEL BELMORE
WILFRED LUCAS
HARRY CARTER

Silent film from 1922. O'Henry would have been organist at the Futurist, Scarborough.

Silent film from 1927, O'Henry still at the Futurist.



Silent film, 1927.

Silent film, 1927.

FULL OF DYNAMIC DRAMA-
GREAT ACTION!
THE MIGHTIEST FEUD IN HISTORY
SAMUEL GOLDWYN
"Roseanna McCoy"
FARLEY GRANGER · CHARLES BICKFORD · RAYMOND MASSEY
RICHARD BASEHART · GIGI PERREAU · JOAN EVANS
MONDAY NEXT

From 1949. O'Henry was organist at the Forum, Jersey, by this time.

Also 1949.

Dating from 1951. O'Henry was organist at the Forum, Jersey, into the 1960s.

1952.

1952.

THEY STOLE A FORTUNE IN GOLD!
Richard WIDMARK at his greatest-reaches for-
A PRIZE OF GOLD
Mai ZETTERLING
Nigel PATRICK · George COLE
Donald WOLFIT
Andrew RAY
MARK ROBSON
TECHNICOLOR
A HUNDRED MINUTES OF THRILLS AND EXCITEMENT FILMED IN POST WAR BERLIN
COMING SHORTLY

1955.

The silent films were accompanied by the organ which provided 'mood music' to enhance the scenes being shown on the screen, so O'Henry would have provided the 'soundtrack'. Once sound films were introduced, he would have played during the interval as well as playing a concert for the entertainment of the audience. There is a gap in his slide collection between 1927 and 1949. It is possible that, during his time at Tussaud's and Capital Theatres, the cinemas retained the slides used, but from 1949 when he had returned to the Forum, Jersey, it appears the situation had changed, and he was allowed to keep the slides again.

O'Henry had an extensive repertoire of recordings which appeared on several record labels, which suggested that he did not have an exclusive contract with any particular recording studio. Some of the record labels are shown here.

ELECTRICALLY RECORDED
LAWRENCE WRIGHT MUSIC Co
Broadcast
SUPER Twelve
POPULAR MELODIES ON A WURLITZER
PART 1, intro. :—"Okay, Baby," "A little love song," "What good am I without you?" and "Make yourself a Happiness Pie" WURLITZER ORGAN
at Madame Tussaud's Cinema
Played by EDWARD O'HENRY
3016-A
MFD. BY THE VOCALION GRAMOPHONE Co LTD HAYES, MIDDLESEX.

The Columbia "Diggins" Event at Columbia State Historic Park

Matt Schnittker performs his lantern show and other attractions

The Columbia "Diggins" event takes place at Columbia State Historic Park, California, and is meant to reproduce a typical 1850's tent town as would have been found in the area during the California Gold Rush. It's an exceptionally well planned, funded and organized event with dozens of volunteers. This was my third year attending and, as in previous years, I brought my period Telegraph, Tintype Portrait Studio, and of course, my Magic Lantern. My wife and one of my sons operated the Tintype booth (Fig 1). We sold Tintype portraits to those that were interested.

We ended up doing about two dozen tintypes including this one (Fig 2) of the local stagecoach operator. I operated the Telegraph and performed the Magic Lantern shows. We had both venues next to each other so I could easily get between them. There was consistent public traffic and entertainment outside the venue. Here was a staged bar fight (Fig 3) that the public, and the lanternist, enjoyed watching. For the Magic Lantern shows, I'm set up in the only room that can be darkened - a reproduction 1800's style building (Fig 4). The Lantern and the performer are always part of the show so it's important to stay in character wearing 1800's clothing. As I perform with period slides - mostly Chromotropes and Slip Slides - I usually end up having to do slide repairs when working in the field. I carry along a small wood "slide repair" box with tools, glue for fixing wood frames, small nails for holding glass in place, Teflon tape for slip slides that lose their cardboard spacers, and most importantly - Lineco Gummed Linen Hinging Tape (www.lineco.com). The Lineco "moisten to stick" tape is great for repairing slide edges, emergency fixes for broken glass, and pull tabs on slip slides. This photo (Fig 5) caught me sitting at the Telegraph repairing my "Good Night" slide with the Lineco tape sitting against my box of slide repair tools.

The four-day event was a lot of fun and I really enjoyed getting to share the magic lantern with so many people. Looking forward to doing it next year. All credit for the photos goes to Ewa Kuc (www.maytheartbewithyou.com) who caught photos of us in action.

Fig 1 (above): Madame Schnittker and son.

Fig 2 (below): The Tintype photograph of the stagecoach operator.

Fig 3 (above): The bar fight.

Fig 4 (below): The magic lantern show room.

Fig 5: Repairing the Good Night slide at the Telegraph display.

Figs 6 & 7: The show!

A Remarkable Dissolving View Sequence

The Torpedo Ship

A fine set of four wood-mounted slide sequence produced by W C Hughes of Brewster House, 82 Mortimer Road, Kingsland Road, London W features the sinking of a three-masted, sail and steam-powered 40-gun iron clad frigate which appears to have anchored for the night, probably during the Crimean War, circa 1855. It is passed by a much smaller ship travelling 'east-west', as it were, moving away from the frigate's stern. The gun boat has passed the frigate and, once at a safe distance, it fires its torpedo (Fig. 2).

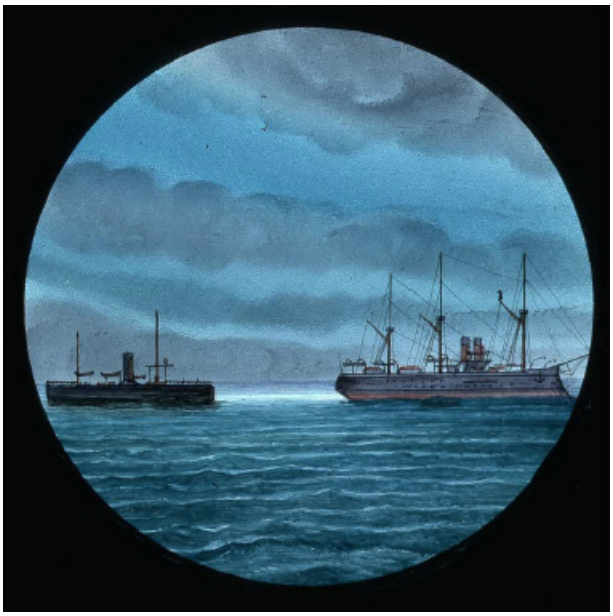


Fig 1 - The frigate at anchor.

raising the morale of British sailors at the time, albeit long after the actual event.

As the torpedo strikes the frigate a loud report and fountain of water erupts (Fig. 4) as it holes the ship (Fig 5) following which the frigate slowly sinks beneath the waves (Figs 6 - 8) leaving a perfectly calm sea.

The effects are achieved by some fairly complex art work. The first slide is a double slip, with the frigate on the fixed glass, the gun boat on one slip and the torpedo on the second. Slide two is the water plume (a label on it instructs

Fig 2: The torpedo is fired and the gun boat hastens away.

Fig 3: Full steam ahead as the torpedo strikes the frigate

Steam was a fairly new means of propulsion at that time, so a twin-screw frigate with two chimneys was a bit of a novelty. No doubt its performance would have been quite spectacular for the period. Marine historians might be able to identify it, though the slides give no clue.

The gun-boat bears a passing resemblance to Her Majesty's Gun-Boat 'Cracker', in which case the frigate would have belonged to Russia. This is quite likely, as the slide set would have been used for

to 'withdraw it at once'. the third is the frigate alone on the water, where it sinks by means of a vertical screw operated from underneath the slide as it fits in the slide stage and the fourth a simple fixed slide bearing the instruction 'darken', as it is faded out as the sequence ends. The slides are illustrated in Figs 9 - 12.

William Charles Hughes was illustrating history, as although he had been operating as a lantern slide and

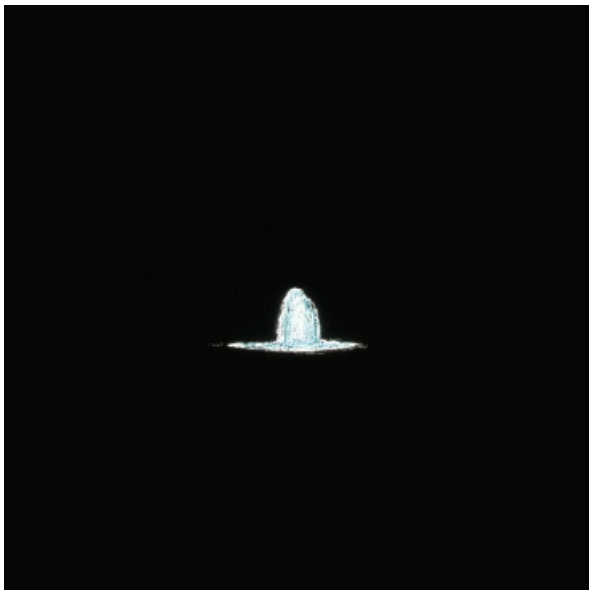


Fig 4: The plume of sea water.

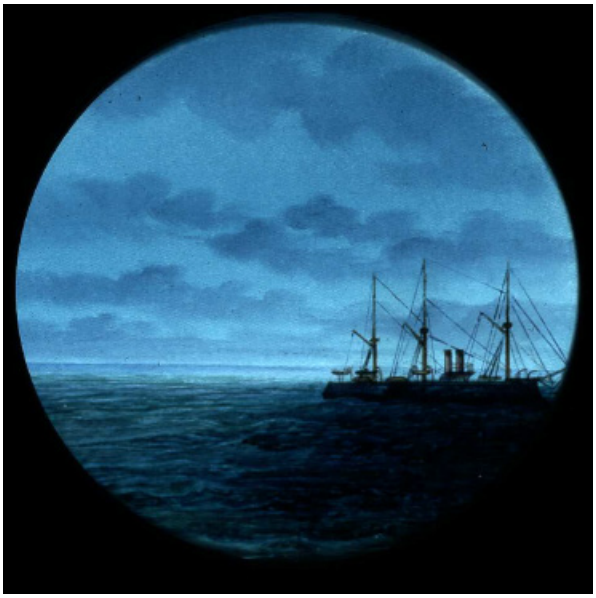


Fig 6: The frigate sinks slowly.

Fig 8: ...until no sign of it remains.

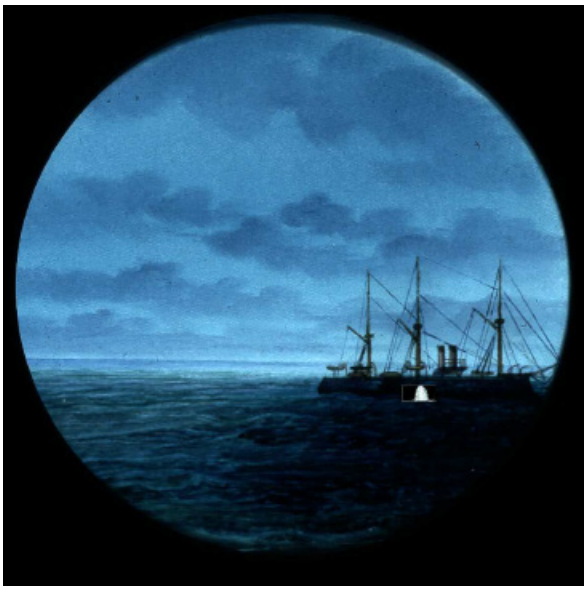


Fig 5: The frigate is holed.

Fig 7: Sinking quietly beneath the waves...

equipment maker since 1871, he did not move to the Brewster House address until 1883. He became very highly regarded as a retailer and maker, taking out patents for new designs of lamp houses, slide carriers, shutters, and adjustment appartatus. He patented the Presto slide carrier (see *The Magic Lantern Gazette* Volume 35 No. 3) as well as an improved choreutoscope and he manufactured the famous Docwra triple lantern for lanternist Colin Docwra.

Slide 1: With instructions to 'Pull Right (which, if started to the left and moved right) draws the torpedo toward the frigate. Pulling the left slider moves the gunboat off screen, exit left.

Slides 2 and 4: Fixed slides with the water splash and the peaceful sea closing the sequence. A and B refer to the lanterns used on a biunial.

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Published by Chalmers Publishing Company, New York, 1927.

Slide 3: Showing the vertical screw effect that the lowers the stricken frigate below the sea.

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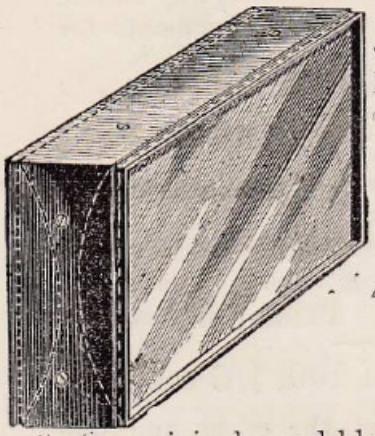

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ROBERT C. DANS (*pro* SMITH & Co.)

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Dr Kentwood Wells, Lantern Historian

Our colleague, Kent Wells, passed away on May 23 of this year. He was 76. He is survived by his wife Marta, and his two daughters, Camila and Gabriela.

Kent Wells as a young man

I was introduced to Kent through his mother, Leora Wells, a founding member of the Society, editor of its first publications, and my first contact with the Magic Lantern Society back about 1980. She told me of going antiquing with Kent and her husband in the 1950s and '60s. At that time every antique store had lanterns and slides, and by today's standards they were incredibly cheap. I think she said that they had an antiquing budget of $5 per trip. The Wells' built up a very handsome collection, with particular strength in toy lanterns. Kent worked with his parents to put on family shows with the slides they collected.

Kent's other passion was hunting for frogs in the backyard. He graduated from that to becoming a leading herpetologist, working for most of his life as a biology professor at the University of Connecticut. His most recent book, *The Ecology and Behavior of Amphibians*, a massive 1,141-page volume, summarized 70 years of research in the field. It was, said *Biology Digest*, "an unprecedented scholarly contribution." His colleagues in the biology department wryly called it "the hernia book."

Somehow, and luckily for us, in the midst of all this academic work on frogs, Kent found the time and energy to keep alive his other passion, the magic lantern. He was editor and publisher of the *Magic Lantern Gazette* from 2006-2019, and editor-publisher of the *MLG Research Supplement* 2019-2024. In truth, most of the serious scholarship that appeared in both formats was Kent's. Before his work, we had only a vague idea of much of American lantern history. In a series of 17 articles, Kent dug into the lantern's past. A few of his titles gives a sense of the broad range of his work:

Stereopticon Exhibitions in Philadelphia in the 1860s.

Magic Lanterns: Christmas Toys for Boys.

The Magic Lantern in American Churches Before 1860.

Henry Morton: Prince of American Lecturers on Science.

Byron's Gigantic Illuminated Stage Pictures.

George Reed Cromwell (1835-1899): America's Most Famous Forgotten Magic Lantern Showman.

His last article, prepared and published just two months before his death, was *Illustrated Popular Lectures on Biology and Natural History in 19th Century America*. In his preliminary notes he describes the difficulty he had in finding material about Biology lectures. They were not reported in the newspapers that Kent used in much of his research, and so, uncharacteristically, he said that he had left room for others to explore further in this subject so close to his own heart.

I shared Kent's interest in research, kept up my contact with his parents, and lived near him for many years, so we got to know each other well. He was unfailingly generous with his time and expertise while working with my own submissions to the *Magic Lantern Gazette*. He brought his kids to see our shows, even in the early days, when they were pretty raw. While he didn't give public shows himself, he did use his slides with his family, carrying on the show tradition started by his parents. I'll miss his sharp mind, quick wit, prodigious scholarship, and gentle spirit. I'm sure that many in the Society will miss him as well.

Kent's two passions: the "hernia book" and the magic lantern.

Contributed by Terry Borton

A Small Article

David Evans unearths a small slide set

Back in the first quarter of the 20th Century a British slide manufacturer known as 'Arbee' produced a range of photographic slides for toy lanterns. The subject matter was mostly related to travel and inventions, the titles, each with its own 'series', the reference numbers commencing with the initials 'RB'. What is perhaps most amazing is that, whilst each rectangular slide measures only 4 3/4" x 1 1/8", it has four images, the circular photographs being only 3/4" in diameter. The detail recorded is remarkable - in Fig 1 you can just about read the licence plate of the vehicle. These are most probably the smallest photographic slides ever produced, with the exception of course of micro-photographs.

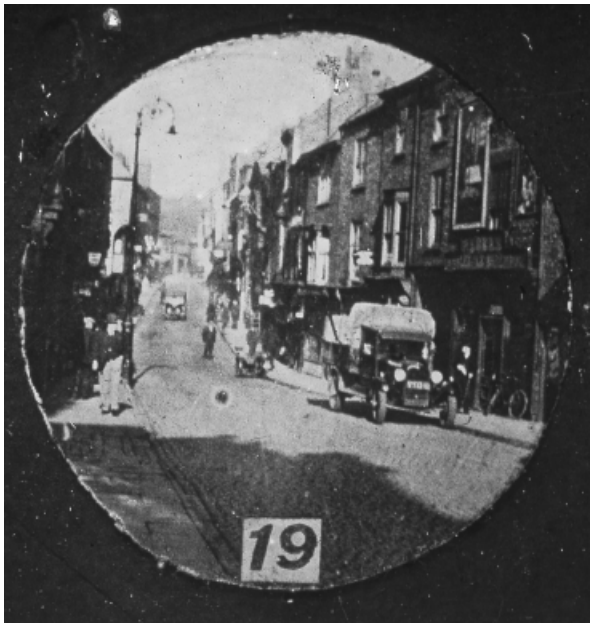


Fig 1: Image 19 of the 48 image set.

Seven sets were available, though only a few have materialised on the market in recent years. Each consists of forty-eight images.

1. Flying Scotsman Express, series RB/100.
2. Cornish Riviera (a Great Western Railway set) series RB/125
3. Isle of Man Boat Express, series RB/175.
4. A Tour around Scotland, series RB/175.
5. Genius of Mankind, series RB/225/
6. Railway Engineering, series RB/250.
7. Mersey Tunnel, Building (Railway) Engines, Printing Daily, A Night with the BBC and Comics, series RB/500.

The BBC (British Broadcasting Company, Corporation later) was founded on 18th October 1922, so Series RB/500 was obviously created after that date, if indeed it was ever produced at all.

The set we have shown here is series RB/100, the Flying Scotsman Express, which ran on the London and North Eastern Railway (L.N.E.R.). The locomotive was built in 1923 for the railway and ran on the east coast route from London to Scotland, retiring from active service on British Railways in 1963. Again we have a probable date for the slide set - circa 1925.

The images on all twelve slides in the set are from scenes along the route of the railway, so it is a factual record of the trip in some detail, which may make it useful for keen railway enthusiasts, as it might contain images not previously recorded, having been photographed shortly after the opening of the route.

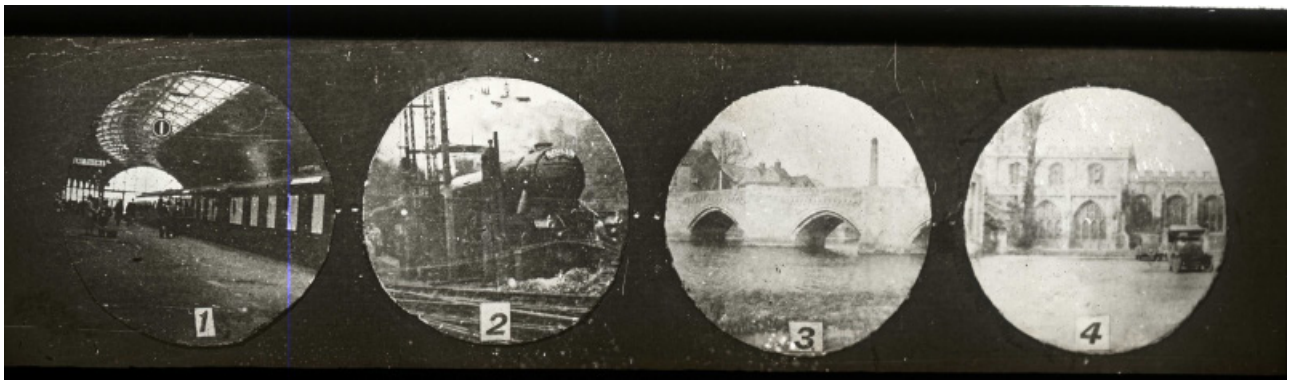
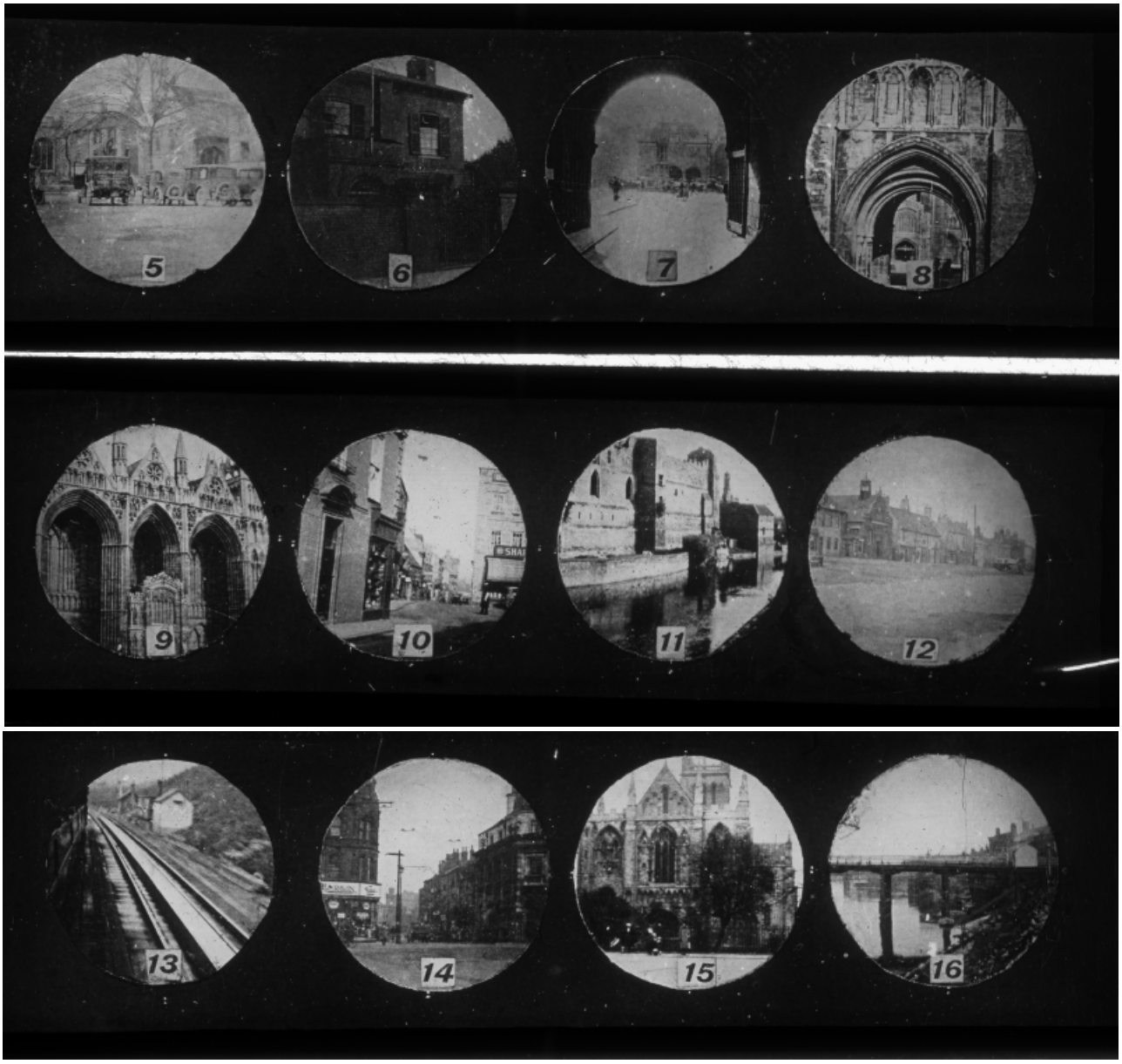
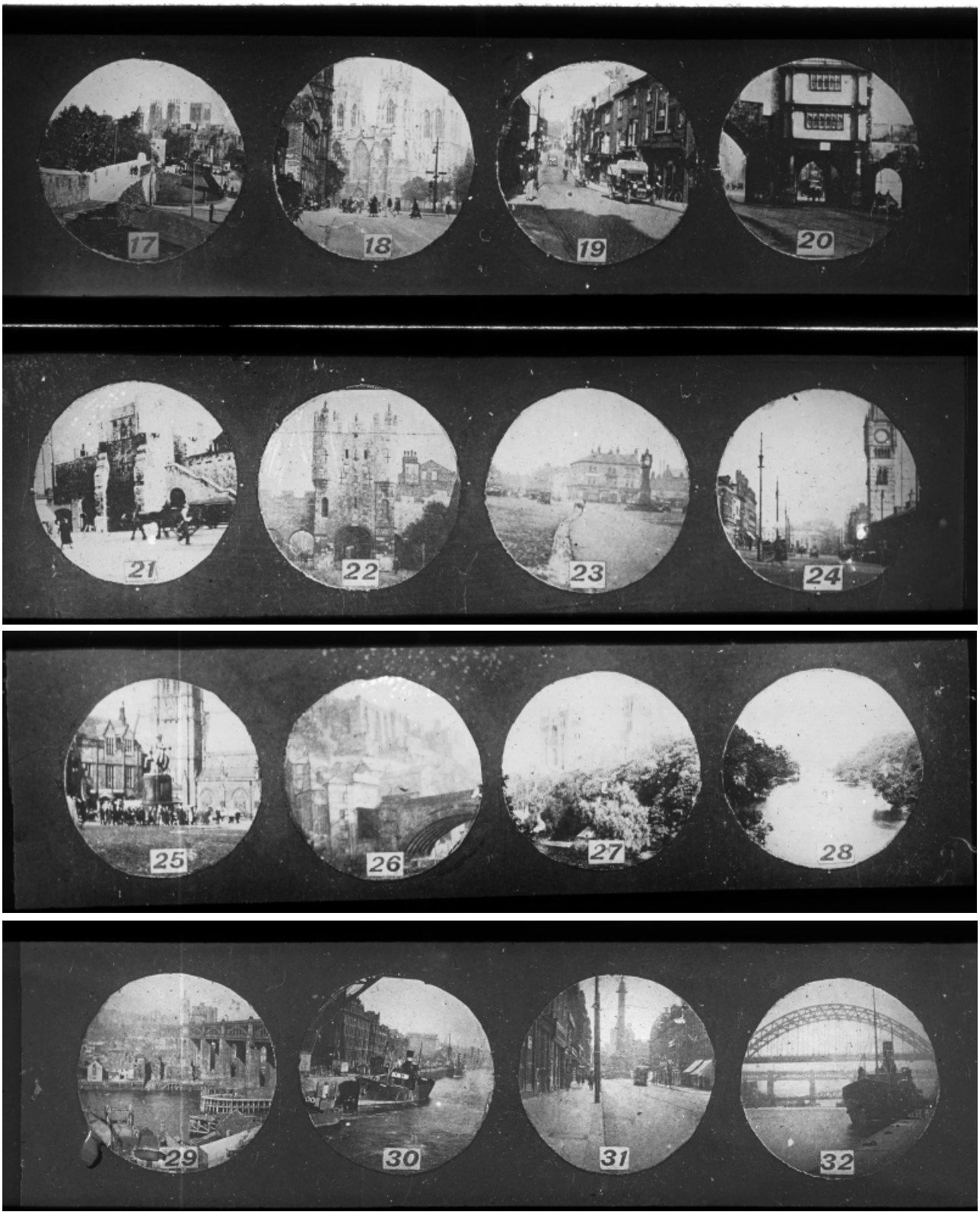


Fig 2: The first four images on the LNER East Coast route to Scotland.



The box states that the set is 'complete with readings', which unfortunately is not actually the case with our set.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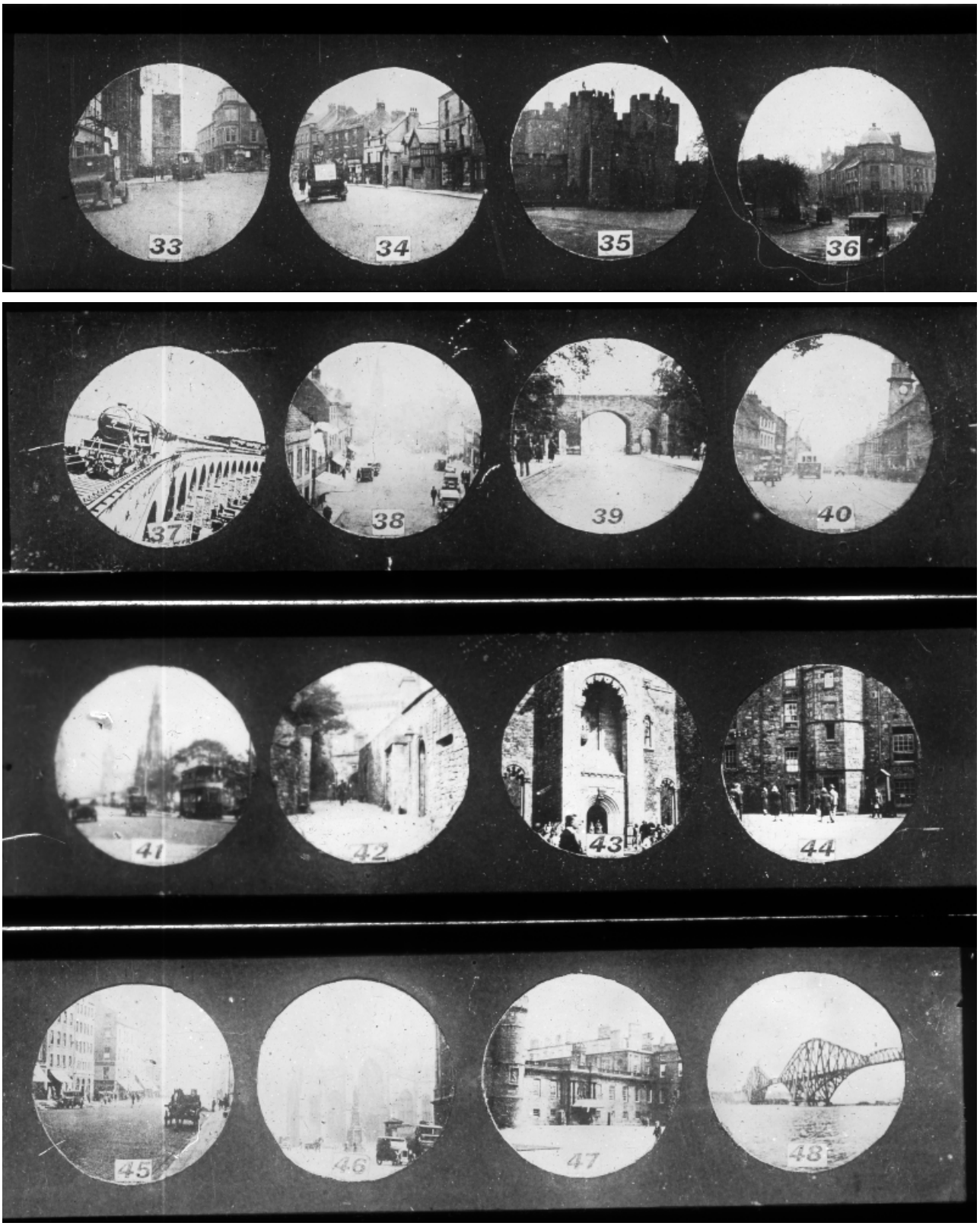


Not very many toy lanterns were available to project the Arbee slides. In Metric, the slides measure 28 mm x 120 mm. One lantern that could have been used was the Ernst Plank "Solid", (Fig 3) versions 97 to 99 used slides 3 cm wide, numbers 97 and 98 using a sperm oil illuminant and number 99 using 'Petroleum' oil - Kerosene. Both have a 1" focal length objective lens, so only a small image.

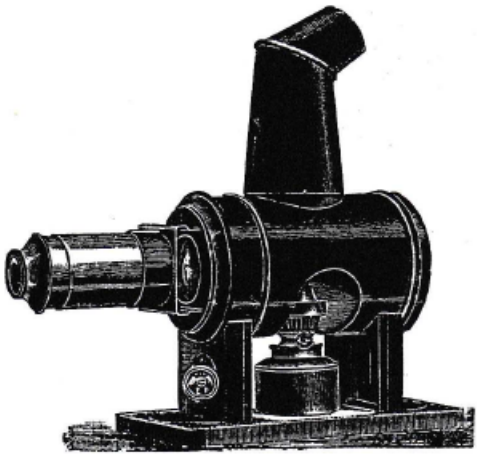
Laterna magica „Solid“

Schwarz lackirt mit Nickelobjektiv.

Die Nummern 99—700/6 sind durchweg mit 3 optischen Linsen ausgestattet.

No.	97	mit	6	Bildern	3	cm	breit,	Nickelobjektiv	25	mm . à Stück
»	98	»	12	»	3	»	»	»	25	» . » »
»	99	»	12	»	3	»	»	»	25	» . » »
»	700	»	12	»	3½	»	»	»	30	» . » »
»	700/1	»	12	»	4	»	»	»	35	» . » »
»	/2	»	12	»	4½	»	»	»	40	» . » »
»	/3	»	12	»	5	»	»	»	45	» . » »
»	/4	»	12	»	6	»	»	»	50	» . » »
»	/5	»	12	»	7	»	»	»	55	» . » »
»	/6	»	12	»	8	»	»	»	60	» . » »

NB. No. 97, 98 mit Brennöllampe in Pappkasten.
» 99—700/6 mit Petroleumlampe, in Kasten mit Bildersteg.
» 97a = 97 in Pappkasten mit Bildersteg per Dutzend höher.
» 98a = 98 » » » » » » »



No. **700/1** ¼ nat. Grösse.

Dieselbe Laterna magica mit Petroleumlampe und je:

12 Stück Glasbildern, 1 Chromotrop, 1 beweglichen Landschaft und 1 komischen Verwandlungsbild in Holzrahmen.

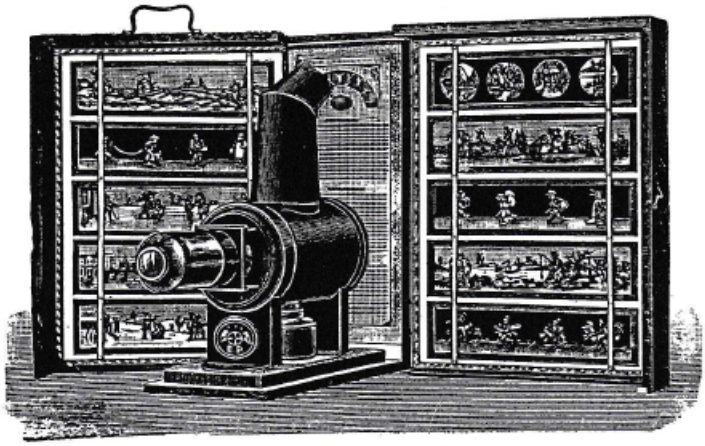
No.	702 A	Glasbilder	4½	cm,	Verwandlungsbilder	4	cm,	Objektiv	40	mm . . . . . à Stück
»	703 A	»	5	»	»	4½	»	»	45	» . . . . . » »
»	704 A	»	6	»	»	5	»	»	50	» . . . . . » »
»	705 A	»	7	»	»	6	»	»	55	» . . . . . » »
»	706 A	»	8	»	»	7	»	»	60	» . . . . . » »

Dieselbe Laterna magica:

hochglanz roth lackirt

in feiner Verpackung in Holzkasten mit 2 Thüren.

Jede Laterna magica hat Petroleumlampe mit bestem Flachbrenner mit Glascylinder.



No. **701** C ¼ nat. Grösse.

No.	99 C	mit	10	Bildern	3	cm	breit,	Objektiv 25 mm . . . . . à Stück
»	700 C	mit	10	Bildern	3½	cm	breit,	Objektiv 30 mm . . . . . à Stück
»	701 C	mit	10	Bildern	4	cm	breit,	Objektiv 35 mm . . . . . à Stück
»	702 C	mit	10	Bildern	4½	cm	breit,	Objektiv 40 mm . . . . . à Stück
»	703 C	mit	10	Bildern	5	cm	breit,	Objektiv 45 mm . . . . . à Stück
»	704 C	mit	10	Bildern	6	cm	breit,	Objektiv 50 mm . . . . . à Stück

Werden zu der **Laterna magica »Solid«** Verwandlungsbilder benützt, so ist zu beachten, dass zu No. 700, 700/1, 700 C und 701 C nur komische Verwandlungsbilder in Blechrahmen zu verwenden sind; zu No. 700/2, 700/3, 700/4, 700/5, 700/6, 702 C, 703 C, 704 C sind alle Verwandlungsbilder in Holzrahmen und zwar immer die nächst schmälere Sorte als wie die Glasbilder, zu verwenden.

Fabrik- Marke.

Fig 3: Ernst Plank "Solid" lantern, available as a complete set in box with lithographic slides 3 cm wide as No. 99C.

Advertisements from Mr Hughes' book 'The Art of Projection and Complete Magic Lantern Manual'

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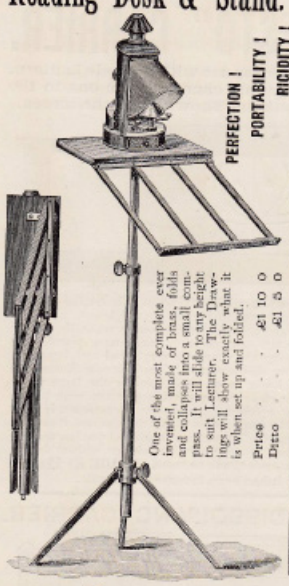

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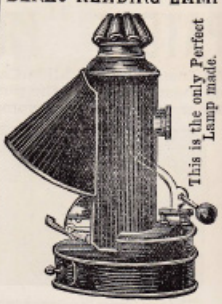

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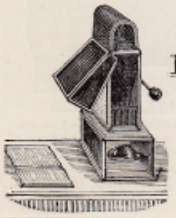
1.—No lecturer need fear failure or smoking out, so common in other reading lamps, the flame will retain its brilliancy as long as the cistern contains spirit, till the very last, without the wick being charred.

2.—The cistern which contains the spirit when filled will last four hours is situated on the exterior of the Lamp.

Directions for Use.—Unscrew the metal cap and saturate in the ordinary way the absorbing material inside the cistern, the residue to be poured out, taking the precaution if spirit is used not to be near a light ; Benzoline gives the best light.

Bell and Drawer for Matches.

PRICE 12/6. Ditto with candle, as a Carriage Lamp, 13/6.



COMMERCIAL READING LAMP,

SIGNAL BELL, EXTINGUISHER, AND MATCH BOX combined.

Price of Lamp, with Signal, Match Box, and Extinguisher - - 7/6 each.
Ditto ditto with Bell - - 9/6 „

W. C. HUGHES, BREWSTER HOUSE, MORTIMER ROAD, KINGSLAND, LONDON, N.

The Purposes of The Society shall be:

To establish an organization of people and entities interested in the collection, possession, conservation, restoration and maintenance of Magic Lanterns, Lantern Slides and related materials;

To encourage members to share their knowledge of Magic Lanterns, Lantern Slides and related materials with any interested persons or entities;

To coordinate research, catalogue material and disseminate information about the history, uses, development and preservation of Magic Lanterns and Lantern Slides; and

To promote exhibitions and/or shows utilizing Magic Lanterns, Lantern Slides and related equipment, in known methods of use in as historically accurate a manner as possible.

Magic Lantern Society of US & Canada (abbreviated to MLS herein) and Editorial Policy.

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Note: As a Society, MLS does not give valuations nor takes responsibility for advice or guidance, nor implies any form of guarantee for the accuracy or consequences arising from information so given.

The Magic Lantern Calendar – July 2024

Events

July 13 & 14, 2024, ***The Art of the Magic Lantern,*** exhibit and performances, Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences, 307 High Street, Mount Holly, NJ 08060. Proposals due February 15.

Aug. 27, 2024, ***BOEM! Or Experimental media archaeological reflections on re-enactment and 'crazy' avant-garde performances as part of media history,*** lecture by Annie van den Oever, Antwerp Summer School Arts & Media Archaeology, University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Sept. 19-21, 2024, ***20th Magic Lantern Convention: Bringing the Magic to Movieland,*** Magic Lantern Society of the US and Canada, Queen Mary, Long Beach, CA https://www.magiclanternsociety.org/2024-convention/

Oct. 27, 2024, ***The Magic Lantern,*** The Prince Albert, Rodborough Hill, Stroud, England, GL5 3SS, UK.

Dec. 15, 2024, ***A Family Edwardian Christmas at Lauriston Castle,*** includes a traditional magic lantern show, Lauriston Castle, 2a Cramond Road South, Edinburgh, Scotland EH4 5QD UK

Dec. 15, 2024, ***Magic Lantern Show,*** a glimpse of 19th-century Venice through original slides of the period, enhancing a little-known but historically and aesthetically valuable photographic heritage, brought to life by Laura Minici Zotti, founder of the museum. Museo del Precinema, Prato della Valle 1/A, Padova, Italy.

Exhibits

July 11 – Sept 28, 2024, ***The Art of the Magic Lantern,*** Burlington County Workers House gallery, Historic Smithville Park, 803 Smithville Rd, Mt. Holly, NJ 08060.

Jul 13-14, 2024, ***"The Art of The Magic Lantern***" exhibit, Eastampton New Jersey. This event will have Terry Borton, Matt Schnittker, Melissa Ferrari, Joel Schlemowitz, Larry Rakow, and others!

Through Aug. 10, 2024, ***Magic Lanterns,*** an immersive exhibit containing luminous prints and projections of astronomical and astrological imagery sources from 1860s magic lantern slides, University of Mississippi Museum, University Ave and 5th Street, Oxford, MS 38655

Through Oct. 31, 2024, ***Exhibition: Collection, tell us a story,*** stories through time, dimensions and space, in the world of the magic lantern, Musee de la Loire, Place de la Resistance, 58200 Cosne-Cours-Sur-Loire, France

Through Dec. 29. 2025, ***Im Zauber des Lichts – Bildrewelten der Laterna Magica: Magic Lantern and Toy Lantern Slide exhibition,*** Freilichtmuseum Hessenpark, Laubweg 5, 6126 Neu-Anspach/Taunus, Germany.

Online

Magic Lantern Performing Group, Improve your skills every other Wednesday on Zoom. Contact Terry Borton: tborton@magiclanternshows.com

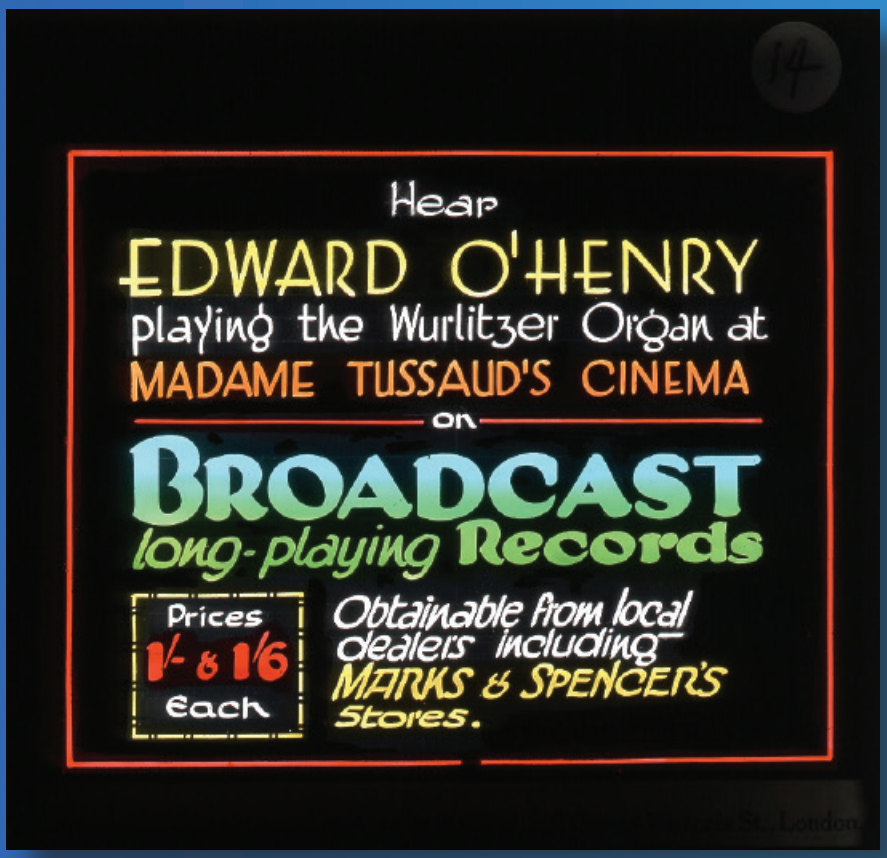
Media History Digital Library, https://mediahistoryproject.org/collections/magic-lantern/ Magic lantern ephemera.

De Luikerwaal Dutch Virtual Museum, https://www.luikerwaal.com/ Magic lantern history, pictures, stories.

Lucerna – the Magic Lantern Web Resource, online database collaboration covering all aspects of magic lanterns. http://lucerna.exeter.ac.uk/

The Museum of American Magic Lantern Shows, 5-minute intro, 10-minute Highlights Tour, 30-minute In-Depth Tour and Kids' Page. www.magiclanternmuseum.com

To add your magic lantern show, exhibition, or other event to our calendar, or to list your show for potential bookings, drop a line to briandrogers@gmail.com.



A CINEMA ORGANIST AND HIS SLIDES

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